DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 258 598 IR 051 212

AUTHOR Wilkinson, David W.
TITLE A Brief Comparative Study of Canadian and American Academic Libraries.
PUB DATE 5 Jun 85
NOTE 17p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Libraries; Comparative Analysis; Educational History; Foreign Countries; Government Role; Higher Education; *Library Administration; *Library Automation; *Library Cooperation; *Library Planning
IDENTIFIERS *Canada; Faculty Status; Online Catalogs; *United States

ABSTRACT

The Canadian and American academic library environments are remarkably similar. This factor is traceable to similarities between the nations themselves and their academic institutions. Both countries have experienced comparable shifts in governmental support and growth patterns in the academic library sector. This has led many to observe that Canadian academic libraries are "American with a difference." These differences concern academic library governance, the extent of faculty status for librarians, library cooperation, and the degree of national planning emphasis. Overall, the components of the two nations' academic library systems are both similar to, yet distinct from, their respective complements. A bibliography is included. (Author/BBM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED258598

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

A BRIEF COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CANADIAN AND AMERICAN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

by David W. Wilkinson

June 5, 1985

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
David W. Wilkinson
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

IR051212

INTRODUCTION

The academic library situations in Canada and the United States are remarkably similar. This similarity is in part traceable to similarities between the two countries themselves. Each nation enjoys a high standard of living, a highly industrialized economy, and an educated urban population. The two countries are also similar in political structure with Canada possessing a federated form of government which emphasizes regional government autonomy. The Canadian province level of government is more or less equivalent to the state level in the U.S. political system. Thus, it is not suprising that many have observed that Canadian libraries, and in particular Canadian academic libraries, have patterned themselves after their U.S. complements.

Canada is both geographically and demographically heterogeneous as well as being culturally diverse. The country's 23 million people reside in ten relatively autonomous provinces and two territories. Canada's powers of government are substantially divided between the nation and the provincial governments. Canada is the second largest country in the world with nearly 5 million square miles of land area. Some 62% of the population uses English as its mother tongue with less than 25% now speaking French. Although a majority of the population is well educated, a significant problem of illiteracy exists for a substantial minority segment of the population.

Canada contains some 105 university libraries and 141 college

libraries. Collectively, some 600,000 students are served by their collections which total some 50 million volumes. Most academic libraries are concentrated in the Quebec and Ontario provinces. The University of Toronto in Ontario is a major force in the Canadian and North Amarican academic world and is the largest university in the nation. The University is actually a federation of six separate universities housing 50 libraries with a total collection count of some 4.5 million volumes.

It is interesting to note that in Canada, the term "academic libraries" formally refers to the equivalent of the libraries associated with this country's publicly supported universities. These institutions are incorporated under provincial acts and most legislation relevent to them is of a provincial nature. The majority of the country's studen base attends the university institutions. The term "college libraries" now refers to the libraries held by the parent organizations of some 145 non-degree institutions that offer post-secondary education. These institutions are both similar to, yet distinctly different from, this country's community colleges. They emphasize university transfer, technical education, and vocational offerings. Canada has relatively few traditional four-year undergraduate institutions. This report uses the term "academic libraries" in a generic sense to refer to the post-secondary education segment and emphasizes the university component.

Canada's primary library organization is the Canadian Library Association (CLA). CLA is responsible for the country's main

library trade journal, the Canadian Library Journal. It is interesting to note that the Association was founded during a convention of the American Library Association (ALA) held in Montreal in 1900. CLA's Canadian Association of College and University Libraries (CACUL) is a major force in encouraging cooperation among academic library units. It also is the main source of standards for university libraries through its somewhat dated Guide to University Library Standards. The Guide recommends, among other things, that university libraries be allocated 10% of the operating budget of their parent organizations.

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) is an association of the nation's 30 largest university libraries. CARL has been known to take rather controversial positions at times in the interests of its institution-members. Overall, it can be seen that the association pattern is strikingly similar to the U.S. experience.

BRIEF HISTORY

The history of Canadian academic libraries is a colorful one and parallels that of the United States. The oldest academic institution in Canada housing a library was the College of New Brunswick established in 1795. King's College, later to be known as the University of Toronto, was established in 1827. As noted, the University is the largest university in the nation and, in fact, operates the largest library system of any form in Canada. Like the U.S., the last quarter of the nineteenth century saw a period of dramatic growth and expansion of higher education in Canada. Many newly

conceived academic institutions were founded during this period, particularly in the developing Western provinces.

Growth in this century has been personified by a long era of slow university library growth suddenly punctuated by a dramatic growth period following 1945. Interestingly, 20 of the nation's 58 major degree granting institutions were established during this era. The 1950's, 60's, and early 1970's represented Canada's super growth period in higher education with most financial support during this time coming from the province level. This expansion was motivated by the desire to cast away Canada's "cultural colonialism" and the need to adapt its population to the rapidly developing industrial economy. Many new academic library building were constructed during this era.

Two major landmark studies had a dramatic effect on the evolution of Canada's academic library change effort and came near the middle of the super growth period. The Williams report commissioned in 1962 found that most university libraries had unfortunately become grossly inadequate due to many years of deprivation. The single most important study focusing soley on academic libraries was the so-called Downs study. The report, titled Resources of Canadian Academic and Research Libraries was released in 1967 and had a remardable effect on academic library improvement. Robert B. Downs, then Dean of library administration of the University of Illinois, conducted a library-by-library study of Canada's academic institutions. His report found striking failures by academic libraries to meet minimum service and collection

standards despite the improvements inspired by the earlier Williams study. In particular, the report revealed that most Canadian academic library collections were inadequate for student assignments and that much progress had to be made to meet the intent of the Clapp-Jordon formula. A criticism advanced by many regarding the Downs study is that its goals and standards were not operationally defined.

The five year period immediately following the Downs study saw the substantial strengthening of Canada's academic library collections. However, public finance austerity again created problems in collection development in the mid 1970s. Decreases in inflation-adjusted book budgets and the simultaneous increase in book and periodical costs resulted in declines in acquisitions by this time. At the same time, financial austerity resulted in the unionization of university personnel in all categories. Library support staff as well as library professionals followed the lead of faculty members and became increasingly involved in collective bargaining. A prolonged strike by University of Toronto support staff highlights this era. At the same time, another problem of the mid 1970s for librarians was the relatively low prevelance of faculty tenure status for library professionals.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

General

The academic library situation in Canada for the most recent five year period has been substantially affected by the recession and its related effects. On the one hand, self imposed ceilings by government on spending due to increasing

national and provincial debts have reduced politically acceptable levels of government support for academic libraries. On the other hand, high unemployment and inflation has resulted in diminished public enthusiasm for all public institutions. Public opposition to endless taxation coupled with the effects of the recession also reduced the level of alumni support for academic institutions during the most recent years. Government support for higher education on an inflation-adjusted basis probably reached in peak in 1975.

Academic-Library-Specific Issues

A number of current issues are unique to the academic library sector and distinct from the public library segment. Many of the major issues of the day parallel the current situation in the U.S. However, Canada has devised unique approaches to these issues in many cases.

Academic Library Governance

In contrast to the U.S. experience, Canadian libraries lean more toward participative forms of administrative responsibility. The notion of a rotating university chief librarian position is much more accepted in Canada than in the United States. A similar approach to library governance which emphasizes participative management are shared top-management structural forms. This approach is supported by CACUL, albeit controversially. One such proposal is a so-called "staff advisory council" where top-level responsibility is shared among several management specialists. Academic library governance in an institutional context is subject to substantial variations in Canada. The treatment of the chief

librarian position is by no means universal. In some cases, he/she is an ex officio member of the institution's academic senate. In other cases, the position is unspecified in this regard. Still another difference in Canada is the fact that the university librarian position is often more removed heirarchially from the senicr university official having ultimate responsibility.

Faculty Status

In general, Canadian librarians are more likely to be granted full faculty priviliges than those in the U.S. However, the nation has a very spotty record in this area. Substantial advances have been made in very recent years in the area of tenure which have served to negate previous ineguities. In the middle 1970s only about 25% of university librarians held tenure.

It is interesting to note that collective bargaining at all staff and professional levels is more prevelent in the education sector in Canada. Substantial gains were made by unions in Canadian academic libraries in the middle 1970s. One wonders if the increase in tenure is somehow correlated with unionization during this period. Some 62% of a university's operating budget is typically allocated to personnel related costs.

Library Cooperation.

In general, Canada has a mixed record in terms of library cooperation at the academic library level. On the one hand, the geographic diversity of the country has encouraged

innovative regional cooperation within individual provinces. However, at the national level the autonomous nature of Canadian academic institutions has not fostered true national cooperative lending effort.. The National Library described below has recently made substantial advances to faciliate interlibrary lending.

Cross cooperation between the academic and public library sectors has been generally limited in the past. However, the National Library Act of 1979, primarily oriented toward public libraries, does allow public-university library cooperative agreements which may have substantial effects in the future. Suprizingly, it is relatively common in Canada for a college library to extend borrowing privilèges to the local community.

Also in contrast to the United States situation is the overall attitude toward the interlibrary loan function. For example, a recent proposal was submitted by the CLA that would provide federal support to net-lender research libraries and thus underwrite a portion of their ILL costs. Such a proposal, which was first presented in 1978, would be unimaginable in the U.S. The proposed legislation, which is still under review, would provide subsidies from both federal and provincial government sources in proportion to a province's share of the nation's overall net lending.

The National Library

Unlike the U.S., Canada has a true national library. The National Library of Canada was established in 1953 and is

separate and distinct from the nation's legislative library, the Library of Parliament. The Library's involvement in academic library sector affairs has been through its role as a planning resource for all Canadian libraries. In addition to its role in preserving Canada's record, it is also responsibile for the national bibliography known as Canadiana. The Library's present National Librarian is Guy Sylvestre who is a strong advocate of library cooperation.

As noted, an important aspect of the National Library is its mandate to assist in the overall planning of all of Canada's library resources. It has been particularly active in cooperative efforts in the academic library sector. Through its Office of Library Resources it has become involved in cooperative collection development of university libraries. It has also gone beyond this to directly and indirectly encourage coordination of the nation's fragmented academic library universe. One such project was its recent effort to achieve standardization of entry formats among all of the data bases used by academic libraries.

Technological Innovation

The U.S. and Canadian experiences are remarkably similar with respect to the rate of acceptance of new technologies. Canadian libraries have been at the forefront in the adoption of automation. Furthermore, Canada's major on-line cataloging service developed from the operations of a university library technical services department in much the same way OCLC evolved. The University of Toronto's cataloging utility, known formally as the University of Toronto Library Automation

System (UTLAS) was established in 1971. UTLAS currently has 30 million records in its data base and is second only to OCLC as a service provider on the North American continent. Like OCLC, UTLAS was spun-off from its parent institution several years ago. Recent proposals for the expansion of UTLAS parallel OCLC's expansion efforts and include plans for ILL and centralized acquisition services.

Other similarities between UTLAS and OCLC are apparent. UTLAS, like OCLC, has been accused of being unresponsive to local needs and subject to deteriorating service in recent years. The internal organizational problems that seem to be inherent in such a venture are shared by both country's systems. Interestingly, a well known regional system was recently disbanded. The Ontario and Quebec province's respected UNICAT/TELECAT system discontinued service in 1980. Ironically however, the University of New Brunswick established its own on-line cataloging system only one year later (PHOENIX).

Current Issues Impacting All Library Sectors

A number of issues are presently in a state of flux that are not limited to the academic library sector. Some have their complements in the U.S. systems and some do not.

Freedom of Information

Canada has made substantial efforts to achieve equal access to information for its citizens. Unlike the U.S., these efforts have received more emphasis at lower levels of governments while federal legislation was being fromulated. At the Federal

level, Canada's Bill G-43 was recently enacted which is the enabling legislation for the nation's previously approved Access to Information Act. Companion legislation at the province level of government was recently passed in both Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. At the same time however there have been major political struggles in Quebec over information related issues.

Education of Librarians

Another area of contrast concerns education for librarians. The two year M.L.S. degree is considered a standard entry requirement for Canadian academic library professional positions. This reflects the fact that six of the country's seven accredited library schools offer only two year programs. This longer term education requirement is higher by both U.S. and international standards.

Library school certification represents an intriguing area of involvement between Canada and the United States. For many years the ALA has assumed an accreditation role concerning Canadian library schools. The Canadian Library Association has actively supported this action for some time. Reoccuring efforts by the Canadian Association of Library Schools (CALS) to preempt ALA certification have failed due to member opposition. A substantial increase in the number of ALA accredited Canadian library schools has been experienced in the last few years.

Intellectual Freedom

As in the U.S., major challenges to intellectual freedom have

mainly been confined to the public library sector. However, some academic libraries have been affected by U.S. equivalent "morality campaigns". The Canadian complement of the American Jerry Falwell is a minister named Kenneth Cambell whose strategy in public libraries is similar to that encountered in U.S. public libraries. In particular, the attacks are directed to the concept of so-called "secular humanism" which emphasizes the encouragement of free thought and scientific enquiry with no absolute standard of ethics.

Encouragement of Canadian Publishing Product

Canada has a distinctly developed ethic concerning the preservation of its culture. This is reflected in government efforts aimed at encouraging works of authorship and publication of and by Canadians. This philosophy is mainly effected by the fact that Canada imports a full 75% of its publishing product.

A uniquely Canadian approach to encouraging Canadian authorship has been its so-called "public lending right" legislative proposals. This notion, also known as the "payments to authors for public use" concept, would compensate Canadian authors in proportion to the number of Canadian libraries which hold his/her authored book. Although not yet approved, the basis for compensation would include academic and research libraries if passed into law. This type of subsidy program would be unthinkable in the U.S.

Another unique approach to the encouragement of Canadian publishing product concerns certain works perceived to have

significant national value. The privately published Canadian Encyclopedia is viewed as one such vehicle and has received substantial support from the province levels of government. Specifically, some $4 million was recently funded by the Alberta province for this effort. Again, this type of governmental support of private sector interests contrasts with the U.S. experience.

CONCLUSION

The Canadian and U.S. academic library situations are remarkably similar. A number of issues have been discussed which serve to illustrate the resemblance between, and differences among, components of the two nations' academic library systems.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

General and Reference:

ALA World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science, 1980. Chicago: American Library Association

ALA Yearbook, 1982. Chicago: American Library Association

Canada, laws,statutes,etc., National Library Act, 1979 (compiled by Canadian Library Association) Ottowa: Canadian Library Association, 1980.

Canada, laws,statutes,etc., Act to Enact the Information Act and the Privacy Act, 1980. Ottowa: Queens Printer, July 1980

"Canada, Libraries in" in Encyclopedia of Library and Information. New York: Marcia Decker, Inc. 1970. vol. 3

Canadian Library Association. Guide to Canadian University Library Standards. Ottowa: Canadian Library Association. 1967

Culture Statistics: University and College Libraries in Canada, 1978-79. Ottowa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada

Denis, Laurent G. "Network Development in Canada: An Overview," in Bowker Annual of Library and Book Trade Information, 27th edition. New York: Bowker, Inc. 1982

Fodor's Canada 1981. New York: Fodor's Modern Guides, 1981

Jackson, Miles M., International Handbook of Contemporary Developments in Librarianship. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press. 1981

"Toronto. University of Toronto Library System" in Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science. New York: Marcia Decker, Inc. 1981. vol.31.

Periodicals, Journals and Monographs:

Beckman, Margaret. "Political setting of libraries in post-secondary institutions." Canadian Library Journal 38 (June 1981): 145-150

Blackburn, Robert Harold. Financial Implications of the Downs Report on Canadian Academic and Research Libraries. Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. 1969.

Brown, Jovanna. "A small academic library in a network setting." Canadian Library Journal 37 (October 1980): 313-316

Clinton, Marshall. "PHOENIX II: An on-line catalogue in a university library." Canadian Library Journal (February 1982): 9-16

Denis, Laurent G. "Libraries and Librarianship in Canada." IFLA Journal 8 (August 1982): 11-41

Downs, Robert B. Resources of Canadian Academic and Research Libraries. Ottowa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. 1967.

Johnson, Elmer D. History of Libraries of the Western World 2nd edition. Metuchen, N. J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1970

Langer, Monika. "Academic libraries: fetishism of information or centre of education." Canadian Library Journal 38 (February 1981): 25-30

Mount, Joan and Joan Turple. "University library service for off-campus students." Canadian Library Journal 37 (February 1980): 47-53

Savage, Donald C. "A historical overview of academic status for librarians." Canadian Library Journal 39 (October 1982): 287-292

Williams, Edwin E. Resources of Canadian University Libraries for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Report of a Survey for the National Conference of Canadian Universities and Colleges. Ottowa: National Conference of Canadian Universities and Colleges. 1962